

# Exhibit A

THE PITCH

# This Is How Much More Money Artists Earn From Bandcamp Compared to Streaming Services

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Independent musicians detail how Bandcamp is putting money in their pocket in a more meaningful way than Spotify, Apple Music, and YouTube.

By Marc Hogan

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You won't find 75 Dollar Bill anywhere on the Billboard charts, but the New York act's latest studio album nabbed the No. 1 spot on experimental bible *Wire* magazine's best albums of 2019 list. Centered around guitarist Che Chen and percussionist Rick Brown—who keeps time by banging on a wooden crate—the collective specializes in droning improvisations that are gritty, hypnotic, transcendent. On May 1, they put out a digital-only album, Live at Tubby's, exclusively on Bandcamp. Documenting the group's last show before the coronavirus hit, the pay-what-you-want release generated \$4,200 from nearly 700 buyers in just two days. That's more than 75 Dollar Bill have made through streaming services like Spotify, Apple Music, and YouTube over the last six years. "Streaming is a joke," Chen tells me. "We *might* make \$100 a year from streaming. On a recent statement of mine, the royalties for one track that had 580 plays on Spotify was zero dollars and 20 cents."

Since the coronavirus pandemic put the live music industry on pause, Bandcamp has waived its usual 10 to 15 percent share of revenues for two full days to support the artists on the platform. May 1 was the second of these Bandcamp Days, which have already helped direct a total of \$11.4 million toward musicians. For 75 Dollar Bill, the influx meant being able to pay out several hundred dollars each to the seven-piece lineup that played on *Live at Tubby's*, as well as to the

shuttered Kingston, New York venue where the album was recorded. The next Bandcamp Day is Friday, June 5, and 75 Dollar Bill are plotting another live digital album for the occasion.

They're far from alone when it comes to smaller bands earning more on Bandcamp than through streaming giants. "This last Bandcamp day, I made \$1,500, which is a shitload of money for me," says Hether Fortune, former leader of the Oakland post-punk band Wax Idols, who now records as a solo artist. "Maybe I've roughly gotten that much over the last five years in total from Spotify. *Maybe*. But that's being generous." For her solo work, which Fortune self-releases, she has opted to stay off the major streaming services, reflecting her views about ethical consumption. "Spotify versus Bandcamp is like Best Buy versus Amoeba," she muses, referring to the corporate retail-electronics giant and the California independent record store chain. Beyond Bandcamp, Fortune also envisions a role for newer community-oriented or cooperative music sites such as Ampled, Resonate, and Currents FM. "There are lots of ways to build a new industry structure," she continues. "Especially right now."

The week ending March 19 was the worst for U.S. album sales since tracking began nearly 30 years ago. The coronavirus-induced slump was perhaps the clearest illustration yet of a longer-term shift in how people listen to and pay for music. Despite several years of growth, the U.S. recording industry's \$11.1 billion in revenues last year were still less than half their 1999 peak of \$22.4 billion, adjusting for inflation. 2019 was also the first year that streaming accounted for more than half of the global revenue total. Streaming's spoils have tended to go to blockbuster, major-label acts, a pattern that may be exacerbated by a system that divvies up payments to artists based on their proportion of overall streams rather than their amount. It all adds up to an environment where non-superstar artists are hurting the most.

Bandcamp's small-scale success has run counter to the mainstream narrative. Founded in 2007, the company has helped artists earn \$518 million through sales of digital albums, vinyl, cassettes, CDs, and assorted merch. In addition to being artist-friendly, Bandcamp can also seem more empathetic than streaming services. In August 2017, the company responded to the Trump administration's proposal to ban transgender people from the military by donating its revenue share to the Transgender Law Center, an Oakland nonprofit focused on transgender rights. And

in response to the recent killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and other black Americans, Bandcamp recently announced an annual Juneteenth drive during which it will donate its share of sales to the NAACP Legal Defense Fund. For this week's Bandcamp Day, several artists and labels will also be donating their proceeds to organizations like Black Visions Collective and various bail funds, as highlighted on the platform's homepage.

With Bandcamp Days, there's hope that some of the money might be going to artists who were testing commercially tricky ground even before the global pandemic. Greg Anderson, guitarist for Los Angeles drone-metal band Sunn O))), and co-founder of the label Southern Lord, says his band and label each usually make more per month through Bandcamp than from all streaming services combined. On the last Bandcamp Day, Sunn O))) digitally released three demos from last year's Life Metal, raising more than \$10,000 for the nonprofit Global Foodbanking Network. Anderson also lauds the ease of selling merch and emailing audiences directly via the platform.

Philadelphia punk rock band Mannequin Pussy, who released their 2019 album Patience on venerable indie Epitaph, have more than 100,000 monthly listeners on Spotify, but guitarist and vocalist Marisa Dabice admits she isn't sure how much the band earns from streaming—for artists signed to a label, such revenues often initially go towards the cost of their upfront advance payment. But Bandcamp processes artist payouts in less than 48 hours, far sooner than can be expected with streaming services, and involves fewer intermediaries. "Bandcamp allows your fans to have a direct link to your music and to your bank account," Dabice says. "Our Bandcamp Day purchases are being used to support a team of six people who were dependent on tour income for survival."

Mac McCaughan, co-founder of Merge Records, one of a range of independent labels giving up their Bandcamp Day revenue shares, is attracted to the way Bandcamp allows artists and labels to customize their presence, as opposed to streaming services' monolithic interfaces. "When someone recommends something I've never heard of before, that's often the first place I'll go," the Superchunk singer and guitarist tells me. "Each page feels very independent and artist-made. And there's no autoplay!"

For many, Bandcamp's fiscally transparent and politically aware ethos is a perfect match with their own views. Producer and bandleader Chad Clark has been making a mark in the Washington, D.C. rock scene since the '90s. He co-produced the Dismemberment Plan's touchstone 1999 album, Emergency & I, and Clark's current project, the art-rock ensemble Beauty Pill, began putting out records on fabled local label Dischord in the early 2000s. After suffering from a rare viral condition, he has had open-heart surgery twice since 2008. "I have a million dollar piece of machinery in my chest," he tells me. "I have good insurance, but it's still expensive."

Beauty Pill's new EP, Please Advise, is out on Northern Spy, another label passing along 100 percent of Bandcamp Day sales to artists. Clark tells me that, immediately after the first Bandcamp Day, the label "sent me thousands of dollars, which is the most I've been paid for recorded music in one payment ever in my life." In contrast, he adds that he doesn't even think of streaming as revenue.

For someone who counts himself lucky just to be alive, the site's efforts take on extra significance. "Bandcamp Day is fucking heavy for me, like, I almost felt like crying," Clark says. "I want the world to go their way."